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Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN CORNYN, a Senator from the State of Texas.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty Creator, the source of blessings, thank You for blessing us with the opportunity to work with a diverse group of people from different racial and religious backgrounds. Thank You for the strength and courage to face this new day.

Help our Senators to produce legislation to guide America on a proper course. Clear their minds and speak to their hearts so that they will succeed in their worthwhile endeavors.

Strengthen us all to tackle life's challenges as You unite us to achieve Your will. Bless us with the forbearance to forgive and work even with our enemies. Hear our prayer and guide us to Your salvation. We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHN CORNYN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 23, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JOHN CORNYN, a Senator from the State of Texas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CORNYN assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, this morning we will resume debate on the pending amendment related to the orange card visa program offered by Senator FEINSTEIN. We have an agreement of 60 minutes of debate prior to the vote. Senators should be on notice that a vote will occur sometime between 10:45 and 11 o'clock this morning. We expect additional votes throughout the day and perhaps into the evening.

Last night, the majority leader filed cloture. The order now provides that all first-degree amendments must be filed by 2:30 today in order to qualify under rule XXII. Senators should also be reminded that the Senate will take its customary Tuesday recess from 12:30 until 2:15 for the party caucus meetings.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, last week and up to our vote yesterday has been, I think, a very productive week for the Senate. We had 17 rollcall votes: 11 by Republicans, 6 by Democrats. We had 8 voice votes evenly divided: 4 by Democrats, and 4 by Republicans. We moved through some very contentious issues. I think the debate was of a high caliber.

I thank the Democratic leader, who is on the floor of the Senate, for his co-

operation, and I thank all Senators for their cooperation and I am looking forward to similar activity. I think we are poised to complete action on this bill this week as contemplated.

We have maintained a delicate perhaps even tenuous coalition in support of the bill reported by the Judiciary Committee as we have worked through the underlying contentious issue as to how to handle 11 million undocumented immigrants with a view not to creating a fugitive class of Americans, remembering our roots as a nation, that we are a nation of immigrants, and recognizing the contribution which the undocumented immigrants, although here illegally, the contribution which they make to our economy.

We have faced a significant resistance to the bill on the ground that it constitutes amnesty. As I have contended before, it is not amnesty. We can't repeat that too often to remind people that amnesty is when you forgive transgression or forgive a wrong or forgive a crime. The undocumented immigrants will have to pay a fine. They will have to pay back taxes. They will have to go through criminal background checks. They will have to learn English. They will have to hold a job for a protracted period of time. And the reality is that they will earn their citizenship.

We have worked through some difficult amendments. Some could have gone either way without destroying the delicate coalition, and others would have perhaps been killer amendments which would have fractured the bill, which has not happened.

For those who are opposed to the bill or want to limit immigrants, the Bingaman amendment reduced the number of future guest workers from 350,000 to 200,000.

We had a very spirited and contentious debate on an amendment by Senators CORNYN and KYL which would have precluded H-2C guest workers to self-petition. Then Senator KENNEDY

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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